

The Signs of Success

Mentors frequently ask:

- ⇒ Am I making a difference?
- ⇒ The following are some of the signs of progress that can be considered successful in a mentor/mentee relationship?

Benefits to Mentees

Mentors may observe signs of success from their mentees as a result of the relationship. Teachers may also notice the same improvements. Remember, the key is **PATIENCE**. Every relationship is different.

- ⇒ Improved attendance
- ⇒ Improved eye contact
- ⇒ Raising a hand more often in class
- ⇒ Increased communication
- ⇒ Taking more risks in class and with friends
- ⇒ Smiling
- ⇒ Improved interactions with peers
- ⇒ Happier at school
- ⇒ Improved appearance
- ⇒ Increased consideration of others
- ⇒ Decreased hostility
- ⇒ More enthusiastic
- ⇒ Fewer trips to the principal's office
- ⇒ Reduced detentions
- ⇒ Improved attitude
- ⇒ Improved academic performance
- ⇒ Paying more attention
- ⇒ Opening up to the mentor

Benefits to Mentors

Mentors make a difference in the lives of at-risk youth. Some of the personal benefits mentors have identified are:

- ⇒ Happier when they return to the workplace
- ⇒ Fulfilled as a result of their commitment as a volunteer in the community
- ⇒ A greater understanding of the community's educational system and education-related issues
- ⇒ Greater self esteem for having positively impacted another's life
- ⇒ Improved relationships with their own families
- ⇒ Often become a more productive member of the workforce

Effective Mentoring Relationships

What is an effective mentoring relationship?

In a study of four Linking Lifetimes programs, Public/Private Ventures attempted to define effective adult/youth relationships and to determine if such relationships do in fact develop in an intergenerational setting. Based on this study, the following are recommended strategies for interacting with mentees.

- ⇒ ***Understand the youth's reluctance to trust.*** Many of the young people in this program have been disappointed by previous relationships with adults. Be patient. It may take a while for your youth to overcome his/her hesitance and begin to trust you. View your purpose in the program as giving, understanding that, at least initially, the relationship may be one directional.

Benefits to Mentees and Mentors

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The author of this publication is unknown

Publication No. (ADP) 01-1005

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- ⇒ **Offer reassurance and support.** It's important to offer reassurance and kindness to your youth and remind him/her that you're available to talk at any time. Don't be afraid to tell your youth that you care about and believe in him/her. Too many young people rarely hear those words.
- ⇒ **Suggest ways to solve problems.** How you respond to a problem your mentee presents will influence the development of the relationship. Try to listen carefully and offer possible solutions without passing judgement. Practical suggestions, rather than criticism or preaching, are usually most helpful. Whenever possible, try to involve the youth in identifying ways to solve a problem rather than lecturing about what you think should be done.
- ⇒ **Identify the youth's interests and take them seriously.** Be inclusive in determining both the activities in which you will engage and the areas in which you will offer help.

